

OUTDOOR GEAR

Essential equipment for the intrepid outdoor photographer

Outdoor photographers are a hardy breed. Venturing out in all weathers and often going that extra mile for a shot, they require specialist equipment and accessories in order to help them carry on shooting for longer and go home with the best possible photographs. That's where this guide comes in: we've provided a cross-section of the array of tools and equipment available to make the life of an outdoor photographer that little bit easier, with clothing and photographic accessories to protect you and your camera from the elements and improve your photography as a result. If you shun the warmth and security of a cosy studio in preference for the natural environment, you should find something here to help enhance your outdoor photography experience.

“Clothing and photographic accessories to protect you and your camera from the elements and improve your photography as a result”



LOWEPRO PHOTO GLOVES

PRICE: £24

Web: www.daymen.co.uk

Manufactured from Lycra, these soft, insulating gloves incorporate something called DuPont Thermax to help wick moisture away from your skin and Contarol Dots on the palm side of the glove, for added grip. Being thin, they're not designed for arctic weather, but do provide sufficient insulation for a brisk but bright winter's day, and are stretchy enough to allow for additional thermal liners to be worn underneath if the mercury drops. The level of grip provided by the previously mentioned Control Dots is excellent: we had no trouble at all in maintaining a firm purchase on our camera, even in adverse conditions, while the thinness of the material meant we could maintain dexterity and therefore complete control over all of the buttons and switches adorning our camera body. A good buy for photographers who don't mind a bit of blatant branding on their mitts.

8/10

CANON 10X30 IS BINOCULARS

PRICE: £350

Web: www.canon.co.uk

Canon's most portable and lightweight binoculars to incorporate the manufacturer's revered image stabiliser are a handy companion for photographers that should prove useful in a range of situations, from wildlife watching to air shows. These compact binoculars come with a padded nylon case and shoulder strap for easy transportation, or should slip easily into most camera bags, alongside your camera gear. The world viewed through these binoculars is crisp, clear and sharp, with the image stabiliser - activated manually via a rubberised button on top of the binoculars - proving to be an invaluable asset, although you need two AA batteries to power it (a fresh set should last roughly 20 hours). The build quality is excellent and the soft-touch rubber coating that envelops the body is tactile and provides a firm purchase. A dioptre adjustment knob sits in-between the adjustable eyepieces so you can balance the focus to suit. A high-quality product that earns its price tag.

9/10

LOWEPRO DRYZONE 200

PRICE: £359

Web: www.daymen.co.uk

This tough, waterproof rucksack is ideal for photographers who head out with their cameras, whatever the weather. Comprising an 'inner drypod', TIZIP zippers provide guaranteed water-tightness. Comprising several layers, the outer zipped compartment of the bag isn't waterproof (just water-resistant) but provides handy storage for essential items. Outer mesh pockets are handy for water bottles and the bag incorporates Lowepro's Tripod Mount that folds away when not in use. We found the weather-sealed TIZIP to the drypod pretty tough to open and close, although you can't help but feel reassured that it's protected from water ingress. The DryZone 200 is big and bulky, but accommodates a huge amount of kit as a result. The inner compartment accommodates a large pro DSLR, four-five lenses (up to 300mm), flash and other accessories or a compact medium-format system. It's tough, sturdy and the harness and waistbelt are comfy. A recommended purchase.

9/10

PHOTOGRAPHER'S SUN POSITION COMPASS

PRICE: £20

Web: www.flight-logistics.com

Once we got our hands on this handy little gadget, we couldn't figure out how we'd managed without it. Designed by Tim Desbois, the sun position compass is constructed from tough plastic, will fit neatly into your camera bag and comes with a protective drawstring pouch. In the centre sits a compass: line it up with North and you can immediately predict the position in which the sun will rise and set at any time during the year.

How often have you found a beautiful location and thought 'if the sun sets just over there, that would make a gorgeous photo', or wondered when the front of your favourite piece of architecture will be illuminated? Whip out your sun position compass and you can pinpoint when's best to return, whether you're in the UK, the rest of Europe and some locations in the USA and Canada. Money well spent for any outdoor photographer.

10/10

PIXELAR E-READER

PRICE: £219

Web: www.pixelar.co.uk

Perhaps not the first thing that springs to mind when looking for items to supplement your photography kit, but we think this new product from Pixelar could prove invaluable to photographers. Many camera manufacturers now supply their manuals as PDFs on disks - not ideal if you need to check how to alter some vital setting while out in the field. With an e-Reader, you can carry your camera manual - along with up to 1,000 books - in one slim, book-sized gadget. At 220g it's lightweight and slips easily into the front pocket of a camera bag. The six-inch E-Ink technology display is impressively clear and easy to read, even in bright conditions - an entirely different experience to reading text on a computer monitor. The internal rechargeable battery lasts up to around 8,000 page turns (it only uses power when 'turning pages'), incorporates 512MB internal memory, supports SD cards and file formats including PDF, MOBI, DOC, WOLF, MP3, HTML, TXT, CHM, FB2, Djvu, PNG, TIF, GIF, BMP, JPG, PPT, EPUB, LIT and PRC. You can alter fonts and font sizes, play MP3s and audiobooks, it's PC- and Mac-compatible and you get free firmware updates for life - what's not to love?

10/10

BILLINGHAM PHOTOVEST

PRICE: £185

Web: www.johnsons-photopia.co.uk

This handy garment is designed to carry all your essential photography accessories, keeping everything secure and easily accessible. Billingham states it's been carefully designed for maximum comfort and protection, and we couldn't agree more. With extra-wide pockets, we found the PhotoVest will comfortably house up to four lenses (wide-angle in the bottom pockets, telephoto in the top). Further internal pockets that can be zipped shut are ideal for holding your memory cards, batteries and other small items, while a metal D-ring on the right front breast of the PhotoVest can be used to hang a GPS unit, torch - or anything else you fancy. It's constructed from water-resistant nylon and has comfy padded shoulders and a mesh panel and vent on the back to help keep you dry. Great for use on its own, or in conjunction with a photo bag.

9/10

